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# Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/186, in which the General Assembly requested information on its implementation with a view to convening, at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly in 2012, a high-level meeting on strengthening efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in and have access to all aspects of development. The Assembly also requested information on best practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts.[a] The present report examines progress made towards the integration of the disability perspective in development processes but notes that the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities remain to be integrated into mainstream development processes. The report also highlights opportunities to ensure the inclusion of disability in the global development agenda towards and beyond 2015.

[a] Selected examples of best practices at the national, regional and global levels in mainstreaming disability in development are periodically published and made available at the United Nations Enable website: www.un.org/disabilities/documents/mainstreaming_best_practices.doc.

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# I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, taking note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/173), adopted resolution 65/186, in which it requested information with a view to convening at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, in 2012, a high-level meeting on strengthening efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in and have access to all aspects of development efforts.

2. As the final deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals draws near, the international community must, through all possible channels, ensure that disability is included in the Millennium Development Goals and in any development framework beyond 2015. The high-level meeting in 2012 will provide an invaluable opportunity to consider a global strategy towards 2015 and beyond for mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

3. It is anticipated that new ideas and specific proposals should be formulated to advance the new United Nations development framework beyond 2015. Dialogue and consultations on a post-Millennium Development Goals framework will present the international community with critical opportunities to ensure the explicit inclusion of disability in any emerging development framework for 2015 and beyond.

4. As a result of the renewed efforts and globally concerted advocacy of multi-stakeholder partnerships that include Governments, the United Nations system, civil society and, in particular, organizations of persons with disabilities, the international community has increasingly recognized the nexus between disability and development and its socio-economic impact. Disability issues are gradually gaining visibility in the outcomes of global conferences and summits on international development.[1] Nonetheless, commitments should be translated into concrete actions. The rights and concerns of more than 1 billion persons with disabilities remain to be integrated into mainstream development processes.[2]

5. The present report provides an overview of the progress and challenges in promoting the inclusion of disability in internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The report also explores options for priorities and possible outcomes for the proposed high-level meeting in 2012.

[1] A series of United Nations development conferences since the 1990s and their follow-up present mixed results on disability inclusion. The outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 65/1) mentions disability and persons with disabilities.

[2] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011). Estimate based on 2010 population.

# II. Overview of progress made in equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities in the context of the global development framework

## A. Current status of disability mainstreaming in the international development framework

6. Mainstreaming disability in development is a strategy for achieving equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. Estimates indicate that over 1 billion people, or approximately 15 per cent of the world's population, are living with some form of disability.[2] Some 110 million to 190 million people, or 2 to 4 per cent of the world's population, live with significant disabilities. The evidence shows that persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse economic and social outcomes. There is an urgent need to transform development processes to be more inclusive, equitable and sustainable if the progress achieved is to benefit all members of society.

7. Research on the relationship between disability and development has continued to increase in recent years. Although the link between disability and poverty is nuanced, mainly as a result of a lack of adequate data, the multiple barriers facing persons with disabilities are understood and well documented. Empirical evidence from both developing and developed countries indicates that persons with disabilities experience poorer educational and labour market outcomes compared to those without disabilities, as well as higher rates of poverty.[2] The multiple barriers relating to the environment, institutions, attitudes, and information and communication need urgent redressing to ensure the inclusion in mainstream society of the millions of persons with disabilities currently at the periphery of development.

8. Historically, persons with disabilities have been largely overlooked in international development processes, including the Millennium Development Goals. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, there has been renewed vigour to address the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities in society and development.[3]

9. Over the past decade, the General Assembly has reiterated its commitment to include the disability perspective[4] in the global development agenda, calling for urgent action in specific priority areas, such as the need for full and effective participation of persons with disabilities, building a knowledge base of disability data and facts and promoting accessibility of the built environment and of information and communications technology.

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[3] See the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I), especially paragraph (e) of the preamble and article 1.

[4] The General Assembly defined equality for persons with disabilities as parity of opportunities with those of the entire population. The term "disability perspective" is often used as an analytical tool by which the impact of disability on development processes and outcomes is analysed, monitored and evaluated. See the report of the Secretary-General concerning the third quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/52/351).

10. A key achievement was the inclusion of disability and persons with disabilities in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals at its sixty-fifth session.[5]

11. To ensure policy coherence between a post-2015 development framework and the current development frameworks, such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action,[6] participation in the processes by all stakeholders, including the disability community, is crucial for future efforts towards inclusive development.

## B. Mainstreaming of the disability perspective and empowerment of persons with disabilities in society and development

### 1. Emerging issues and trends

*Strengthening national frameworks on disability through the implementation of the Convention*

12. With over 100 ratifications of the Convention, more and more Governments are increasing their efforts and undertaking new initiatives for its implementation. Strategic frameworks for the advancement of persons with disabilities have been adopted in the context of domestic policies. Those efforts include exploring policy options for disability inclusion in the mainstream development agenda; promoting accessibility; empowering persons with disabilities; and building national capacities and institutional frameworks to incorporate the disability perspective at all levels of decision-making.

*Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships*

13. Multi-stakeholder partnerships within and outside the United Nations system have explored the cross-sectionalities between disability and other issues, such as gender, child poverty, mental health, peace and security, and emergency and disaster management.[7] For example, there is growing recognition of disability and HIV/AIDS as an emerging issue. The Global Contact Group on AIDS and Disability, an informal multi-stakeholder partnership comprising United Nations agencies, civil society bodies and other development partners, was established with the intention of mainstreaming a disability perspective in HIV/AIDS advocacy and programming efforts at the international level. The Group promoted the inclusion of issues that affect persons with disabilities on the agenda of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held in June 2011.

14. Within the United Nations system, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, whose members represent 25

[5] In particular, goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) calls for special efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to productive employment and meet their nutritional needs through targeted and effective programming. Further information on the Millennium Development Goals is available from www.beta.undp.org/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html.

[6] Adopted at the conclusion of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (9-13 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey), available from www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home/conference.

[7] See www.un.org/disabilities.

United Nations bodies, has finalized its joint strategy and plan of action, which will support the implementation of the Convention on the ground.

15. Private-sector collaboration is fairly new in the promotion of disability-inclusive development and can play a vital role by ensuring that corporate social responsibilities include anti-discriminatory employment practices, training in marketable skills and support of business ventures and partnerships with persons with disabilities and their organizations.

16. Improved coordination among Governments, ministries, United Nations agencies, donors, national and international development organizations, civil society and other bodies could promote a holistic approach to mainstreaming disability in development.

17. For example, in response to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development[8] established a working group to ensure the inclusion and involvement of persons with disabilities in reconstruction and community rehabilitation efforts in Haiti at all stages of the emergency management and reconstruction efforts. The working group developed a common strategy, established partnerships among interested parties, and coordinated advocacy efforts to ensure that all rebuilt and new infrastructure is fully accessible and barrier-free to persons with disabilities. A toolkit entitled "Haiti: reconstruction for all" was developed by the Global Partnership to help structure a more comprehensive approach to disaster management to ensure that long-term recovery is inclusive of persons with disabilities.[9]

## 2. Socio-economic aspects of disability

18. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and that it results from interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their participation in society on an equal basis with others.[10] Addressing those barriers is often the most cost-effective way to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

19. As reported in the *World Report on Disability*, over 1 billion people currently live with some form of disability. That figure is expected to increase as the world's population is ageing at an unprecedented rate.[11] Studies suggest that the incidence of disability associated with obesity and other chronic illnesses is also on the rise within the working-age population.[12] The changing structure and condition of the global population requires society to address environmental accessibility through designs that provide reasonable adaptation in meeting the needs and capacities of all users.

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[8] See www.gpdd-online.org.

[9] Global Partnership for Disability and Development Working Group on Haiti Reconstruction, "Toolkit for long-term recovery: Haiti — reconstruction for all", 2010. Available from www.gpdd-online.org/media/news/toolkit_introduction.pdf.

[10] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, paragraph (e) of the preamble.

[11] *World Report on Disability*.

[12] Jay Bhattacharya, Kavita Choudhry and Darius Lakdawalla, "Chronic disease and trends in severe disability in working age populations" TRENDS Working Paper Series, No. 05-4 (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 2005).

*Economic costs*

20. The exclusion of persons with disabilities results in significant costs to society.[13] Estimating disability-related loss in productivity and associated taxes is complex to measure. One such estimate using data from Canada showed that the loss of work through short- and long-term disability was 6.7 per cent of gross domestic product.[14]

21. Another example is the exclusion of children and adults with disabilities from access to education, which affects human capital formation and bears significant economic and social costs for society as a whole. The Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010 states that disability is one of the least visible but one of the most potent factors in education marginalization.[15]

*Social costs*

22. At the individual level, social exclusion often contributes to further discrimination and renders persons with disabilities disproportionately likely to live in poverty. Removing physical, attitudinal and information barriers is critical and results in numerous benefits to individuals, including improved self-esteem, enhanced well-being and a stronger sense of empowerment. This, in turn, brings benefits to society as a whole, including greater social cohesion.

*Investing in persons with disabilities*

23. The costs of promoting accessibility and reasonable accommodation should be regarded as an investment in the future. The upfront costs involved in promoting accessibility should be weighed against the long-term benefits to all members of the society.

24. Investment in persons with disabilities is necessary not only to promote compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons and other relevant instruments, but also for the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for all.

25. Access to employment is the most cost-effective method of reducing poverty among persons with disabilities, their families and their communities.[16] The majority of persons with disabilities can contribute to economic productivity once barriers to their participation are removed.[17] Similarly, in the education sector, efforts should be scaled up to reach out to the millions of children currently excluded from schools. Evidence suggests that inclusive education, adapted to meet the broad range of needs of children with disabilities, is generally more cost-effective and produces more meaningful results than educating them in segregated settings.

26. Additional opportunities for training in information and communications technology for young persons with disabilities should be promoted. As employment

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[13] International Labour Organization, *Disability and Poverty Reduction Strategies* (Geneva, 2002).

[14] *World Report on Disability*.

[15] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the marginalized* (Paris, 2010).

[16] *Disability and Poverty Reduction Strategies*.

[17] *World Report on Disability*.

opportunities in the field of information and communications technology expand throughout the world, training and skills in this area can increase the scope for employment of persons with disabilities, providing an untapped supply of labour and leading to increased productivity and growth.

27. The mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in development, with a view to reducing costs and as an investment in the future, should focus on implementation through progressive realization of minimum standards on accessibility. Research shows that accessibility compliance is most cost-effective when taken into account in the initial stages of design and planning of new buildings.

28. Developing countries may draw upon experiences and best practices for lower-income countries to promote accessibility through innovative design and cost-effective strategies. While the cost of universal design could remain low with its incorporation in projects from the outset and local participation, the cost of failing to do so can be significant, taking into account human costs and opportunity costs incurred owing to inaccessibility.[18]

## C. Progress towards the integration of the disability perspective and persons with disabilities into development policies and programmes

### 1. Member States[19]

*Legislative measures*

29. Member States provided examples of legislative protections for the rights of persons with disabilities. Some countries, such as Greece, underlined protection measures included in their national constitutions. Others noted the adoption of specific laws to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, in 2010, the Parliament of Guyana passed the Persons with Disability Act, which is guided by principles enshrined in the Convention. Burkina Faso passed the Law on the protection and promotion of disability rights; Cameroon passed the Law on the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities; and Slovenia adopted the Act on equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the light of the Convention and the Millennium Development Goals. Member States also reported on the adoption of legislation implementing the Convention. For example, Senegal adopted the Law of social orientation on the implementation of the Convention. Further information on legislative developments with regard to the Convention can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto.

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[18] Harold Snider and Nazumi Takeda, "Design for all: implications for bank operations" (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2008). Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Universal_Design.pdf.

[19] Forty-one countries submitted their input in response to a note verbale from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat dated 15 March 2011: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

*Action plans and programmes*

30. A number of Member States, including Ethiopia, Georgia, Indonesia, Lithuania, Mexico, Peru, Qatar, Slovakia, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, have national strategies, plans or programmes related to development, social inclusion or human rights, focused on or specifically inclusive of persons with disabilities. Other Member States, such as Saudi Arabia, have specifically included persons with disabilities in national plans and programmes on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

31. Some Member States reported on the creation of bodies to oversee State efforts to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina established a council for persons with disabilities to promote cooperation among State and local institutions and associations of persons with disabilities. The Congo created a national committee for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the national plan for persons with disabilities. The Syrian Arab Republic created a national committee to implement disability policies and strategies in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

32. Several Member States reported on efforts to ensure accessibility in society. China reported on its efforts to ensure barrier-free facilities and services, including through the formulation of barrier-free-building regulations and the promotion of accessible network and communications technology.

33. A number of Member States, including Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States, reported strategies and initiatives to include disability in international cooperation and development assistance programmes, including through the funding of projects specifically intended to increase accessibility. Italy reported its adoption, in 2010, of guidelines for the mainstreaming of disability issues in the policies and activities of Italian cooperation, which contain recommendations to strengthen efforts to promote disability in the Italian development agenda. The United States reported the establishment, in 2010, of the Disability Inclusive Development Office to mainstream disability into the work of the United States Agency for International Development, including through the development of training and guidance tools on disability-inclusive development, and support disabled people's organizations. That plan is being implemented in 2011. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported on its efforts to promote development and implementation of programmes and plans on care for persons with disabilities within the States members of Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América.

*Strengthening the collection and analysis of data and statistics on disability*

34. The General Assembly has accorded high priority to building a knowledge base of disability data and information to generate disability-sensitive development policies and processes. The collection and analysis of such data and statistics are crucial to the effective formulation and implementation of disability-inclusive policies and programmes, and in the monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

35. Member States, including Argentina, Grenada, Mexico, Oman and the Philippines, reported on their collection of data regarding persons with disabilities on the basis of their national censuses. Italy, Lithuania and Poland also reported on

their collection of statistics on disability by means of data-collection processes focused on the labour force or health. Several countries, including the Philippines and Sweden, reported either the current application of or efforts under way to apply the World Health Organization (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health framework for measuring disability.

36. Other Member States announced the development of new initiatives: Canada reported the launch, in 2010, of a new disability data strategy, and Spain noted the mainstreaming of disability indicators in all active population statistics gathered by its National Statistics Institute.

37. Several Member States provided examples of their efforts to integrate the disability perspective in the monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, Costa Rica reported on the creation, in 2011, of a national register on disability statistics, through which it seeks to create a statistical tool consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

*Building and strengthening global, regional and national networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships*

38. Member States reported on a variety of efforts to build and strengthen global, regional and national networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Member States, including Jordan, Morocco, Turkey and Turkmenistan provided examples of their partnerships with United Nations agencies and/or regional bodies. Turkey reported on its partnership with the European Commission on a project intended to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equal access to goods and services and the ability to contribute to society and the economy.

39. Several Member States provided examples of intergovernmental partnerships to address the situation of persons with disabilities. Guyana reported on extensive bilateral cooperation with Cuba on ophthalmological care, which allowed for immediate assistance while helping the country to develop capacity and sustainability over a specified time.

40. A number of Member States reported on partnerships with non-governmental organizations. In some cases, as reported by Andorra, Government consulting or monitoring bodies on disabilities had been composed of both ministry representatives and representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities.

## 2. United Nations system

41. To advance the mainstreaming of disability into the Millennium Development Goals, organizations of the United Nations system have undertaken initiatives and actions focused on mainstreaming disability.

*Mainstreaming disability in development policies and practices*

42. The Secretariat continued to provide forums for stakeholders to exchange ideas in the field of disability and development, with a view to mainstreaming disability in the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a series of meetings and discussions in close collaboration and partnership with Governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, civil society and other stakeholders. The events were held in conjunction with sessions of the General Assembly, the Commission for Social

Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, among others, and with the annual commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

43. Most recently, during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held in New York in June 2011, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other stakeholders for the AIDS and Disability Partners Forum,. Other meetings and events in 2010 and 2011 focused on issues such as the empowerment of persons with disabilities through sports,[20] the promotion and protection of the rights of children with disabilities,[21] and expanding education and employment opportunities for women and girls with disabilities.[22]

44. In 2010, the International Day focused on tools for making the Millennium Development Goals a reality for persons with disabilities. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized several events at United Nations Headquarters, including collaboration with WHO focusing on community-based rehabilitation and other tools to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality for persons with disabilities.

45. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities developed a guidance note for United Nations country teams and implementing partners to facilitate the inclusion of disability issues in their areas of work.[23]

46. An interdepartmental task force on accessibility was established jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to develop policy guidelines to accommodate the access needs of persons with disabilities and facilitate their participation in meetings, conferences and services on United Nations premises.

47. A report was prepared for the Human Rights Council on article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, entitled "Thematic study by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the role of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities" (A/HRC/16/38). OHCHR subsequently promoted the messages contained in the study, including the need to mainstream disability rights more broadly and consistently in development cooperation. In 2010, OHCHR contributed to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals through high-level advocacy by the High Commissioner herself and dissemination of key messages, including on the rights of persons with disabilities.

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[20] On 27 June 2011, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a panel discussion on the theme "Sports for inclusive development: sports, disability and development — key to empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities".

[21] On 17 June 2011, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs co-organized an interactive panel discussion on the promotion and protection of the rights of children with disabilities.

[22] On 23 February 2011, during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a panel discussion on the theme "Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM): expanding opportunities for women and girls with disabilities in education and employment" was organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and partner organizations.

[23] See www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1024.

48. During the forty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development, held in New York in February 2011, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission presented his report on the monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and discussed his planned activities to contribute to mainstreaming disability in development.

49. Organizations of the United Nations system reported new and ongoing efforts to mainstream disability issues within the work of their respective organizations. The United Nations Development Programme continued the development of communities of practice, where information is shared at the regional level among stakeholders with specific interests and expertise in disability issues. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is developing a global strategy on disability and inclusive development and finalizing guiding principles for its work. In January 2011, at UNICEF headquarters, a staff orientation was held to sensitize UNICEF staff on disability-related issues and the critical importance of mainstreaming those issues in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

50. A central element of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Disability Inclusion Initiative, launched in 2009, is enabling ILO staff members to address disability issues in their work. Among the efforts in this regard, an internal campaign entitled "Disability inclusion is everyone's work" is to be launched in 2011.

51. United Nations bodies also provided examples of mainstreaming efforts at the regional and national levels. In the European region, UNICEF and WHO supported the initiative "Better health, better lives: children and young people with intellectual disabilities and their families", which was launched in 2010 and among whose aims is to ensure that all children and young people with intellectual disabilities are fully participating members of society.

52. In the Republic of Moldova, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its implementing partners advocated for the inclusion of a disability perspective in health plans and policy. In February 2011, in collaboration with relevant Government ministries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mine Action Service conducted a meeting to discuss the process of ratification of the Convention.

*Strengthening the collection and analysis of data and statistics on disability*

53. During the third session of the Conference of States parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in September 2010, and in collaboration with other stakeholders, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a side event on disability-inclusive monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The panellists discussed the current status of disability data and steps towards effective formulation of disability-inclusive monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals.

54. In June 2011, WHO and the World Bank launched the *World Report on Disability*, which summarizes the current situation of persons with disabilities and offers guidance for policy and practices to help overcome exclusion. The report includes the first new prevalence estimates on disability since the 1970s and extensive recommendations on improving disability research and statistics.

55. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization published a methodological guide on the collection and analysis of education data concerning persons with disabilities for Latin America and the Caribbean.[24] The guide encourages harmonization of concepts, classifications and the methodological development necessary to ensure regionally comparable information.

56. The Asia-Pacific Regional Office of UNFPA supported country offices in conducting situation analyses on the extent to which women and girls with disabilities are excluded from reproductive health services and protection from violence. In 2010, a qualitative study and a literature review were conducted on that topic in the Solomon Islands and in India, respectively. UNFPA has been providing technical assistance in Kazakhstan and the Dominican Republic on reproductive health and family planning to build knowledge on disability issues.

57. To facilitate Asia-Pacific-wide knowledge sharing on disability, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) published "Disability at a glance 2010: a profile of 36 countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific", which includes country-by-country data on the population of persons with disabilities.[25] Between 2009 and 2011, ESCAP conducted training programmes and extensive testing of the question sets in a number of countries. The outcome of that endeavour contributed to the adoption in 2010 by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics of a specific question set for surveys, advancing the methodology for disability data collection.

58. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia collected and examined national statistics and policies related to the integration of persons with disabilities in public life and published the results in a report on proposed methods to combat poverty among persons with disabilities[26] and a working paper on practices fostering the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.[27]

59. In September 2010, WHO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched the report *Mental Health and Development: Targeting People with Mental Health Conditions as a Vulnerable Group*. The report uses the Convention to reinforce the need for development agendas to be inclusive of and accessible to persons with mental disabilities.

60. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) also reported on efforts to ensure accessibility of information to persons with disabilities. In June 2011, the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights agreed to move forward on an international instrument that would facilitate access to copyrighted works for visually impaired persons and others with print or reading disabilities.

*Building and strengthening global and regional networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships*

61. OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are collaborating in the establishment of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to mainstream disability in all aspects of society and development through capacity-building of national stakeholders.

[24] Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001909/190974s.pdf.

[25] Available from www.unescap.org/sdd/publications/Disability/Disability-at-a-glance-2010.pdf.

[26] E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/IG.1/4 (Part I).

[27] E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/WP.4.

62. In 2010, the ILO Disability Team and the Bureau for Employers' Activities established the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, composed of 35 companies and with the purpose of knowledge sharing, development of joint products, such as an enhanced database of disability laws, strengthening of employers' networks and the linkage of companies and other groups to country-level ILO or other disability activities.

### 3. Civil society organizations

63. The International Disability and Development Consortium is a network of 23 international non-governmental organizations supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts in over 100 countries. In Peru, the rural development non-governmental organization Arariwa has been operating a community-based rehabilitation project in several provinces of the Cusco region. Apart from specific services for children with disabilities, Arariwa mainstreams disability, resulting in the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their relatives in all types of poverty reduction projects. The project has been instrumental in the formation and empowerment of at least five rural organizations of persons with disabilities.

64. Global networks of civil society organizations often help national non-governmental organizations to work along with their Governments to develop national policies that are inclusive of persons with disabilities. In Togo, the disability movement was involved in the development of the first poverty reduction strategy paper (2009-2011). The Togolese Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FETAPH), with support from CBM (Christian Blind Mission) and Handicap International, was active in advancing the rights of excluded and discriminated groups in the recent national poverty reduction strategy process. Furthermore, all actors in the process became aware of the importance of the Convention and the need for inclusive policies and action.

65. Following Cyclone Nargis in 2008, CBM supported the emergency response programme of its key partner in Myanmar, the Leprosy Mission Myanmar, to include persons with disabilities in the humanitarian response. This led to ongoing collaboration to support disability rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities and the creation in 2010 of a community-based rehabilitation and disability and inclusive development project in 120 locations over three years.

### 4. Multi-stakeholder partnerships

66. In collaboration with the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development organized the International Forum for Development Partners on Disability and Development in September 2010 in Brussels. The event brought together development partners, including representatives and disability focal points from Government donor agencies, United Nations bodies, multilateral organizations and private foundations interested in or currently working on disability issues and inclusive development, to share experiences and help increase donor coordination and collaboration.

67. The *Community-Based Rehabilitation Guidelines*, launched in 2010 in Abuja, were developed in association with ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the International Disability and Development Consortium. The Second Continental Congress on Community-based Rehabilitation was held in Oaxaca, Mexico, in March 2010. The

Congress was jointly organized by the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF, WHO, the Community-based Rehabilitation Network of the Americas and the Caribbean, the National Agency for Family Development (DIF), the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS), Piña Palmera, CBM and the municipal government of Oaxaca. More than 550 participants from 17 Latin American countries took part in the Congress, including persons with disabilities and their organizations. The participants produced the Oaxaca Manifesto, which calls upon States to include persons with disabilities in the development of their communities and societies by implementing the Convention and promoting the use of community-based rehabilitation in public policies.

# III. Strategic framework for reinforcing the disability perspective in the global development agenda

68. During the past two decades, a series of United Nations global development conferences, summits and their follow-up have been held.[28] In the outcome documents and policy commitments and recommendations resulting from those conferences, persons with disabilities and the impact of disability on overall development and its processes have been largely overlooked. When references are made to disability or persons with disabilities, it is often within the context of a long list of vulnerable groups requiring care, as well as protection issues.[29] Only a few outcome documents, such as the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, have focused on developmental approaches to the advancement of persons with disabilities.

69. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reinforces the overarching principles and goals promoted in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. From the inception of the Convention to its adoption, the General Assembly expressed the view that equality of persons with disabilities must be achieved with and through their full participation in development as both agents and beneficiaries.

## Key priority areas for strategic action for disability-inclusive development

### 1. Equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development

70. The General Assembly has defined accessibility as the means and goal for disability-inclusive development. In its resolution 64/131, the Assembly encouraged Governments to accelerate the exchange of information, guidelines and standards, best practices, legislative measures and Government policies regarding the situation of persons with disabilities, in particular as they relate to inclusion and accessibility.

[28] See www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/UNDA1.pdf.

[29] The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation views persons with disabilities as members of a vulnerable group of society, which requires protection from debilitating diseases and special care for causes of ill health, including environmental causes.

71. Policy measures by Governments to ensure disability-inclusive action, taking into consideration resource constraints, could focus on the three areas of accessibility:

(a) Promoting environmental accessibility with reasonable adaptation, in both the physical environment and in the field of information and communications technology;

(b) Providing appropriate and accessible social services and social protection that ensure a minimum of well-being for all;

(c) Encouraging and developing participatory, democratic and accountable institutions that promote fundamental freedoms for all.

### 2. Collection, analysis and use of disability data and statistics

72. In the past three years, the General Assembly, through its resolutions 63/150, 64/154 and 65/186, has emphasized the urgent need to strengthen the collection and compilation of national data on the situation of persons with disabilities. The emphasis was on following existing guidelines on disability statistics to enable development policy planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation to be disability-sensitive, in particular in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

73. Despite the obvious requirement for the collection of disability data, the paucity of data on disability and inconsistencies in methodology used to measure disability continue to be an obstacle in promoting disability-inclusive development. The challenge is greatest in developing countries, where both the availability and use of disability data and statistics remain particularly limited.

74. The report to the General Assembly (A/65/173) provided comprehensive and detailed options for strategic action on the development and use of disability statistics in support of inclusive monitoring and evaluation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It strongly supports the inclusion of disability in national censuses using the internationally agreed guidelines for measuring and collecting disability data.

75. Argentina and some other countries have introduced disability-specific indicators into their Millennium Development Goals monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Such an innovative approach, situating disability indicators within an existing framework for monitoring and evaluating development progress, could be a cost-effective way of narrowing the gap between the social and economic status of persons with disabilities and that of the overall population.

76. At the same time, the caveats and limitations of disability data collection within a census are evident. Hence, supplementary sources of data, such as sample surveys and administrative registers, should be fully utilized to meet many data requirements for meaningful evaluation of the impact of disability on development policy and programmes and on persons with disabilities. It has been observed that persons with disabilities are less likely to be involved in national surveys because their disabilities may cause them to be disregarded; for example, people who are deaf would not generally be able to participate unless sign language is used.

### 3. Capacity-building of stakeholders

77. The inclusion of a disability perspective in development strategies requires enhanced capacity-building of stakeholders at all levels, including organizations of persons with disabilities, to maximize their participation in development activities, and planners and programmers at national, regional and international levels, including within the United Nations system. Increased attention should be devoted to the empowerment of organizations of persons with disabilities and the training of representatives of governmental and intergovernmental bodies. In this regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and OHCHR, conducted a capacity development workshop in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2010. Representatives of Governments, intergovernmental bodies, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations participated in the workshop sessions on disability mainstreaming, accessibility and inclusive planning, focusing on the implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean subregion.

### 4. Promoting international development cooperation

78. The report to the Commission for Social Development on mainstreaming disability in the development agenda (E/CN.5/2010/6) discussed the status of disability inclusion in international development cooperation at the global, regional and subregional levels. The report reviewed different forms and levels of mainstreaming disability in development cooperation. Some of the established frameworks for promoting disability inclusion in development cooperation are outlined below.

79. Within the United Nations system, there has been progress in development cooperation policies and procedures at both the policy and operational levels. This includes the two principal functions mandated in 2005 to contribute to the work of the Economic and Social Council: the biennial Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review. The Forum reviews trends and progress in international development cooperation and promotes greater coherence and effectiveness among the development activities of different development partners. The annual ministerial review is tasked with assessing the progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals and other goals and targets of the United Nations development agenda.

80. In addition, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the common strategic framework for United Nations operational activities at the country level, can play a significant role in helping Member States to include disability into the overall national framework for development. In October 2010, the United Nations Development Group endorsed a guidance note to support United Nations country team action and to facilitate the inclusion of disability issues in the common country programming process.

81. Also within the United Nations normative framework for operational activities, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review establishes key system-wide policy guidelines for development cooperation and the functioning of the resident coordinator system (country-level modalities for the United Nations system). Each review focuses on emerging issues, in addition to traditional thematic issues requested by the Economic and Social Council in follow-up resolutions. In this context, disability should be highlighted as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed in

the quadrennial review to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to disability mainstreaming in the framework of the United Nations operational system at the country level.

82. Beyond the United Nations system, existing frameworks at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels should be fully utilized to include disability in development cooperation. At the multilateral level, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank have made notable contributions to international development programming to raise awareness, build capacity and issue policy guidelines for addressing disability issues effectively at the national, regional and subregional levels.

83. Regional decades focused on disability and their corresponding frameworks have addressed the issue of mainstreaming disability in development. However, most of those initiatives are still ongoing and it is too early to report on the results. A third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons is currently being planned by the regional membership.

84. The framework for mainstreaming disability in development cooperation has expanded to include South-South and interregional initiatives. There are cooperative efforts between China and Asian and African countries and between Brazil, Mexico and other members of the Organization of American States. Trilateral cooperation among Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and other ASEAN countries has also been evolving.

85. Recent bilateral initiatives provide good examples of mainstreaming disability in development cooperation, including initiatives by the Australian Agency for International Development. In March 2011, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation held a seminar in collaboration with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability to review strategies for mainstreaming disability in development cooperation.

### 5. Building on existing mechanisms and networks for disability-inclusive development

86. The disability community is increasingly building partnerships with stakeholders from other human rights and development spheres. The Global Partnership for Disability and Development is an example of such an effort, where a multi-stakeholder partnership is contributing to the advancement of persons with disabilities through the sharing of resources and knowledge at global, regional and national levels. The Global Partnership has also demonstrated how multi-stakeholder partnerships can help Governments, international organizations and civil society in the planning and implementation of development policies to ensure inclusion of the concerns of persons with disabilities.[30]

87. At the regional level, experience suggests that some regions are more advanced than others in incorporating the disability perspective by mobilizing

[30] "Toolkit for long-term recovery: Haiti — reconstruction for all" (see footnote 9).

regional expertise, tools and other resources in implementing disability norms and standards.[31]

88. At the national level, grass-roots organizations of disabled persons can build alliances with mainstream sectors with experience in advocacy on employment, housing, health and other issues. Such alliances have the potential to facilitate the inclusion of disability issues in mainstream agendas.

# IV. The way forward: promoting a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond

89. There is a clearer recognition that disability is a cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of economic and social development. However, persons with disabilities continue to experience adverse social and economic outcomes and remain disproportionately represented among the world's poor.[32]

90. The following section provides recommendations for action for (a) inclusion of disability in the Millennium Development Goals and their implementing policies, programmes, monitoring and evaluation frameworks; (b) inclusion of disability in the post-Millennium Development Goals development framework; and (c) preparatory steps for an international conference on disability and development in 2015, through which the international community could develop the development agenda within the post-2015 development context.

91. Furthermore, options are discussed below for a high-level meeting on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly (see resolution 65/186).

# V. Recommendations

92. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) In the course of pursuing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals until 2015, the international community should intensify its efforts to include disability in the existing Millennium Development Goals through strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships; mainstreaming disability into international cooperation; and developing the evidence base on the situation of persons with disabilities for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development goals;

(b) It is critical that Governments and the United Nations system should assess the impact of all policies and programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals on persons with disabilities. Available disability-specific indicators should be used, as appropriate, to fill existing data gaps regarding the economic and social situation of persons with disabilities, in the context of current monitoring and evaluation of the Goals;

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[31] The countries that constitute the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) have established a working group on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in relation to disability-inclusive development.

[32] *World Report on Disability*.

(c) Persons with disabilities should take an active role in all relevant discussions at the global, regional, national and local levels. In particular, as the international community begins discussions on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, upcoming consultations will provide a platform to integrate the disability perspective in any emerging framework. Therefore, in all preparatory processes leading to a post-2015 development framework, Governments and the United Nations system should facilitate the active participation of persons with disabilities;

(d) Governments and all stakeholders should enhance linkages between disability and sustainable development discourse within the context of the three pillars, economic, social and environmental. The inclusion of disability and persons with disabilities, specifically in the social pillar, will strengthen efforts at all levels to promote sustainable development.

93. The General Assembly may also wish to consider the following specific actions towards 2015:

(a) An international conference on disability and development could be organized in 2015 to bring together key stakeholders to review progress and achievements under the Millennium Development Goals and to develop strategies and establish key priorities for post-Millennium Development Goals development efforts, with a view to adopting a global plan of action for disability;

(b) Preparation for such a global conference should be based on the outcomes of prior consultations at regional and subregional levels. Such regional and subregional meetings could be held to provide input to a global plan of action and guidelines for mainstreaming disability in the global development agenda.

94. The General Assembly may further wish to consider the following options for a high-level meeting on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

95. The proposed high-level meeting could include one or more of the following outcomes:

(a) Road map for maximizing achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities in the years remaining before the final deadline in 2015;

(b) Plan of action to include disability as a cross-cutting issue in a post-2015 international development framework;

(c) Decision to organize a global conference in 2015 and an outline of preparatory steps for such a conference, including regional and subregional meetings.

96. In considering these options, the General Assembly may wish:

(a) To promote the implementation of the international disability architecture,[33] consisting of both human rights and development instruments,

[33] See A/63/183. The international disability architecture includes the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with other international norms and standards relating to disability.

including by calling for wider signature of, accession to and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto;

(b) To facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations in all preparatory processes leading to a post-2015 development framework, as well as in ongoing development processes and conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to ensure the inclusion of the disability perspective;

(c) To establish clear, achievable goals and measurable targets and indicators for action for disability-inclusive implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals and for the design of related policies, their implementation, evaluation and monitoring;

(d) To commit adequate resources for the collection and analysis of data and statistics on the economic and social development situation of persons with disabilities as related to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals;

(e) To promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, including through international cooperation, for concrete action towards improving accessibility to information and communications technology and physical environments and mainstreaming disability in development cooperation;

(f) To ensure that particular attention is given to persons with intellectual disabilities; persons with psychosocial disabilities; blind-deaf persons; women and children with disabilities and persons with multiple disabilities in all preparatory processes to develop a disability-inclusive framework towards 2015 and beyond.